

This is BILK # 53, May 1993. Editor ist Ulrich Magin, Hohenheimer Str. 60, W-7306 Denkendorf, Germany (Postal code from July 1.: 73770). Subscriptions are DM 15 for Germany and Europe, and - due to a 50 % price increase - DM 20 for the rest of the world.

BEHEMOTH

- Scotland: Nessletter (Rip Hepple, Huntshieldford, St Johns Chapel, Bishop Auckland, DL 13 1 RQ, UK) has, in # 112, interesting news on several new sightings of Nessie, and a new report on a monster observed in Loch Lomond. Earlier sightings in L Lomond can be found in Dinsdale's "Leviathans" and in Campbell's "Search for Morag".
- Bibliography: Seljord Lake monster, Norway - in Nessletter 112. "The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes", by Billy Wilder, which has the Loch Ness monster as one of the stars, was shown on Austrian TV (ORF 1), on April 17. Fortean Times 67, p. 10: monster sturgeon hoax, China; p. 28-31: Bill Gibbon's hunt for surviving dinosaurs in the Congo. Andreas Trottmann has sent me a cutting from the Sunday Magazine, February 1993, which introduces Nessie-hunters Rip Hepple, Alistair Boyd, Andreas Trottmann and wife Angela and Steve Feltham, including their various sightings and musings. Regrettably, the generally good piece is illustrated with the notorious fake photo by Frank Searle, showing the dinosaur postcard surfacing in the Loch. Sheila Barrera has sent me word on her most recent exhibition of her paintings of Lake monsters, it will be at The Left Bank Gallery, Flint, Michigan, from May 9 to June 9.

ISIS

- Bits and Pieces: Splash, with Daryl Hannah as mermaid, was on German TV (ARD) on March 21. An Eßlingen plumber has ads with a mermaid (Eßlinger Zeitung, March 20). Black Francis, former singer of the American pop-group Pixies, has a new LP called "Frank Black" including "songs on black holes, mysterious UFO-sightings and hominoid marine creatures who want to live in space". (Prinz, Stuttgart, March 1993, p.91).

LEVIATHAN

- Bibliography: Fortean Times 67, p.35: Gambian sea serpent; on sea-serpents in general, by Karl Shuker: centrefold. A new analyses of Caddy sightings from British Columbia, by LeBlond and Bousfield, which concludes that Caddy's mane could be a breathing apparatus (suggested before, I think, by the late Ivan T Sanderson) and that "LeBlond does not know what they are, but suggests they are related to some of the sea mammals we know. While their habits mean they are only seen occasionally and never caught, he thinks that when one is caught it will be one of the known but rare animals of the ocean." With this, it appears LeBlond departs from his previous held idea that Caddy is an unknown species.
- Strange (and big and out-of-place) penguins: Johannes Fiebag, in his recent book "Die Anderen" (München: Herbig 1993) suggests that monsters are products of a cyberspace universe created by UFOs, in which we poor mortals live. One of the proofs for this idea, amongst stories of Nessie, Caddy and other lake monsters (some of them long ago exposed as hoax) is the famous penguin episode off Florida, 1948 (on p.221). In the German edition of Reader's Digest, March 93, p.90-103, we find a report on the recently discovered cave with wall paintings in the Mediterranean off France. Once again, we read of stone-age paintings of "three penguins" discovered there (p. 98). An archaeologist friend has informed me the mysterious paintings have now been identified as "snow chickens", which indeed they resemble more than penguins. Exit enigma.

MOA

- The big egg: On February 23, several papers (Rheinpfalz, Süddeutsche Zeitung, p.10, Stuttgarter Zeitung, p.12) covered news of the find of a giant egg on Cervantes Beach, 250 km from Perth, Australia. The egg has a circumference of 80,5 cm Ken McNamara, palaeontologist from the West Australian Museum, said the find was extremely interesting for the study of ancient ocean streams, as he supposed it came from an Aepyornis, a giant bird from Madagascar which became extinct 2000 years ago. He supposed the egg had been washed by a river into the Indian Ocean, and carried from there by wind and waves to Australia.

A second theory assumes the egg could come from a species of emu which died out in Australia 15 000 years ago. Nobody, so far, has suggested a Moa. The Stuttgarter Zeitung adds that a similar egg was discovered south of Perth in 1930. Ken McNamara also appears in a clipping from August 7, 1982, from the "IWZ" (Stuttgart). The egg in question was also discovered at Perth. Another such find, perhaps the 1930 one, is mentioned in Tim Dinsdale's "Leviathans" (p. 152). Perhaps the IWZ-egg and the one mentioned by Dinsdale are the 1930-find. Perhaps the new "find" is only a recycled newspaper-report. Does anybody know more about this case? And why seems everybody so certain that the eggs (maybe as many as 3 in 60 years) come from Madagascar, when they were all found at Perth?

In May 92, two German tourists allegedly saw a surviving moa, the 2.5 m bird of New Zealand. Normally assumed to have become extinct 500 years ago, two moas were observed by Franz Christianssen and Holger or Helga Umbreit - or so is supposed, as nobody knows where the tourists came from or has been able to trace them, despite much publicity in Germany (Eßlinger Zeitung, April 3, p.28). All we have is an entry into a cabin's log-book on the Southern Island. I would suppose the entry by the tourists was a simple joke, just like the many "today I saw Nessie"-entries in the logs of youth hostels in Scotland, but it seems the "sighting" is being taken serious by Dave Wilson, a Christchurch journalist for the "Press". He asked dpa, the German press agency, to help him find the witnesses. He found the entry while researching a second moa sighting on the Southern Island: in this case, hotelier Paddy Franey, together with 2 friends, spotted a moa in the Craigieborn Range - and took a fuzzy foto of it. Photographic experts from Canterbury University think the picture shows "a very large bird of unknown species". Experts of New Zealand's environmental organisation DOC believe it's all a hoax - Dr Ken Hughey said there was only a "million-to-one-chance" of surviving moas. The strange circumstances of the German sighting, the fact a hotelier was a witness, and all this around April 1 - was it a joke that fooled dpa? Or are they really looking for moas down under?

USOS

● Sweden: Yes, again! In February, Swedish papers reported the Russians had admitted in talks with Swedish prime minister Bildt in Moscow (with Yeltzin and foreign minister Kozyrev) that they had subs operating in Sweden. However, what the Russians actually confirmed was that "something is going on under water" - no comment on the source. Yeltzin said he was sure he still was in command of the navy, and he hadn't given orders to operate in Swedish waters. Bildt seems to have been under pressure to finally stop Russia from sending subs to Sweden, as there were three sub incursions in 1992 - in May, July and September. Also, Swedish navy allegedly managed to tape record submarine sounds. Commander-in-chief Gustafsson said that even laymen could distinguish between the recorded sounds and biological sounds and it was only a question of time till the exact nationality of the intruders were known. However, he admitted he had not discussed the tapes with the Russians. Gustafsson now hints at some "secret agency" within the CIS which runs the submarines. (Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, February 23, p.6) Mysteries over mysteries. More on recent Swedish USOs in Fortean Times 67, p.50-51.

● USA: New York, Oktober 30, 1989 - Linda Cortile is abducted by aliens. They take her into a Ufo, which submerges in the Hudson River. As the Ed Walters-case, the new "genuine" UFO case that has American ufologists go gaga has USO connotations. Witness to the whole event was none other than Perez de Cuellar, but he won't talk, according to Bob Hopkins, who discovered the whole absurd story. It is taken seriously in Fiebag's book (see Leviathan section), pp.9-14 and in Sign 22. Serious flaws in the case are uncovered in the CENAP Report # 200, p. 7 (research by Phil Klass), while Fortean Times 67, p.53, has a comment by Andy Roberts who says American ufology will not stand the shock when the Cortile case collapses. I'm afraid it will - it survived MJ-12 (faked UFO-documents) and Ed Walters (faked UFO photos). USOs are an interesting enigma with many sea-serpent connections, and it was only a question of time for the abduction hysteria to enter this field.

Next Bilk will have a "marine life" section with giant crabs and leatherback turtles, plus the regular features. The Moa section this time may seem out of place, but I felt that giant eggs on beaches were a topic to be covered in BILK.